

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

A Step-by-Step Guide to Celebrating an HUSSC Award

Step 1- Choose:

A: Date

B: Type of Celebration and

C: Contact Person for the HUSSC Celebration

Ideally, **allow two months to plan** and host an HUSSC celebration. This will increase the odds that a member of the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) staff, the Montana Team Nutrition staff as well as local legislators can attend the event.

Date Selection Tips:

- Choose two or three potential dates for the celebration.
- If you plan on inviting your Montana House Representative and/or Senator, remember that the Montana Legislature is in session from January - early May in odd numbered years. If your celebration will be held during the legislative season, choose a Friday as most legislators are back in their home districts on this day. (It is recommended to invite your local legislators so that they can learn/appreciate the steps you are taking to support school wellness.)

Find Your Celebration Style:

- Some schools use the HUSSC award celebration as an opportunity to showcase the healthy meals they serve each and every day.
- Others, like Townsend School, in Townsend, MT, scheduled a special assembly for students, parents and staff.
- Still other schools tie their celebration into an existing event. For example, you can celebrate your HUSSC award during one of your regularly scheduled Family Fun Nights, at a Spring Picnic, during National School Lunch or Breakfast Week, etc.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Step 2- Confirm Date & Details with Montana Team Nutrition

Complete the Montana Team Nutrition Contact Sheet (included in the Appendix A) *before* calling or emailing your Montana Team Nutrition contact or School Wellness Coach. This way, you will have the entire relevant event planning information at your fingertips.

Montana Team Nutrition Staff:

Katie Bark, RD; (406) 994-5641; kbark@mt.gov

Molly Stenberg, RD; (406) 994-7217; stenberg@montana.edu

Regional School Wellness Coaches:

Billings:

Virginia (Ginny) L. Mermel, PhD, CNS; (406) 661-2642; virginia.mermel@montana.edu

Missoula:

Kelsey Gauthier, RD; (406) 690-7366; kelsey.gauthier@montana.edu

North/Central – Great Falls:

Kori LaLiberty, RD; (719) 244-1616; kori.laliberty@montana.edu

Miles City:

Beth Wiome, RD; (406) 861-7834; elizabeth.wiome@montana.edu

Step 3- Make a List of Invitees

Share your success far and wide! Invite as many people to the award celebration as your school can comfortably accommodate. The typical list of invitees includes parents, volunteers, the Superintendent, school board members, the local media, and other community members and stakeholders such as major school boosters and donors. Consider inviting national, state and local legislators so they can appreciate the steps you are taking to create a healthy school environment.

Step 4- Send out Save-the-Date Cards via email

As soon as you have confirmed the date of your celebration with your School Wellness Coach, send save-the-date cards to everyone on your invite list and post the event on the school calendar.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Step 5- Choose a Reimbursable Menu

This is your chance to showcase the wonderful nutritious foods you serve every day. You may wish to serve the students' favorite menu, or borrow one of the creative menus from a school that has celebrated an HUSSC award in the past:

- Luther School, in Luther, Montana serves a different ethnic meal once each month. For its 2012 Gold with Distinction Award celebration luncheon, Luther School served a New Zealand menu to honor the heritage of the school's cook.
- Gallatin Gateway Schools served breakfast for lunch to emphasize the importance of breakfast to students' academic performance.
- Ponderosa School in Billings, Montana served a favorite student menu along with an A-Z salad bar.
- Some schools feature a Local Foods Lunch.

If you are holding a reception that does not include a meal, consider serving a healthy snack such as fruit kabobs. Sample menus as well as Luther School's recipes for ethnic meals are provided in Appendix C.

Step 6- Plan a Physical Activity

Incorporating physical activity into your HUSSC Award celebration is a great way to highlight the role it plays in academic success and the fact it is one of the three criteria required for an HUSSC award.

Outdoor Activities:

Field Day events such as relay and sack races, or obstacle courses have been popular ways to showcase physical activity at HUSSC celebrations. Be sure to have a backup plan in case the weather does not cooperate.

Host a school-wide walk for all students and staff to participate in.

Indoor Activities:

If space permits, an obstacle course can be set up indoors. Other indoor activities such as line or hip-hop dancing, or any choreographed dancercise routine work well. Alternatively, you can showcase Brain Gym or Mind and Body activities (these are physical activities that can be performed during the traditional lessons).

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Step 7- Showcase Nutrition Education

Some schools' HUSSC celebrations have featured wellness-themed skits, songs and/or poems performed by the students as a way to showcase nutrition education efforts (see the Gallatin Gateway School's HUSSC Award Program in Appendix E for ideas).

Step 8- Choose Speakers

Often the school's Principal or the Health Committee Chair serves as the master of ceremonies. Guest speakers usually include the Superintendent, the person presenting the award, legislators or other honored guests who ask or have been asked to make a brief statement.

MT OPI will try to send a staff member to each celebration. OPI staff appreciates the opportunity to speak briefly, offer congratulations and present the award certificate. If an OPI staff member is not available, MT Team Nutrition will send a representative to present the award.

Let your guest speakers know how much time you have allotted for them to speak. Remember, this celebration is for and about the students so ask speakers to keep their remarks brief.

Step 9- Confirm Speakers and Obtain Short Biographies for any Guest Speakers

Before finalizing your Agenda/Program confirm that all of the anticipated speakers are still available on the day of your presentation. Be sure to have a short biography to refer to when introducing your special guests/speakers so that you can give them a warm welcome.

Step 10- Design and Mail Formal Invitations

In addition to the date, time and location, your invitation should include the price of an adult lunch and information regarding the RSVP deadline and contact person. Invitations can be as simple as a brightly colored flyer or as formal as a printed invite on card stock. Samples of three different styles of invitations are included in Appendix B.

Step 11- Create A Press Release – Submit for Approval

Steps 11 and 12-(Program Design) should be completed 4-6 weeks ahead of time, as OPI must approve all HUSSC Award Celebration press releases and celebration agendas.

Sample press releases are included in Appendix D. Create a similar press release for you school's celebration and send it to your MT Team Nutrition contact or School Wellness Coach so that it can start the approval process. OPI will distribute the press release to outlets per your request.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Step 12- Finalize Agenda and Design a Program

When developing your agenda, estimate the time needed for each portion of the event and make sure you have the correct names and titles for everyone listed in the Program. A sample Program is included in Appendix E. Submit this along with the draft Press Release, to your MT Team Nutrition contact or School Wellness Coach so that the approval process can begin. Verify with your HUSSC School contact that these items will be available the day of the event: 1) the award banner, 2) the award certificate and 3) pins (for Gold and Gold with Distinction award levels). Consider asking someone with a high quality camera to take photos of the special event.

STEP 13- Send Approved Press Release to Media

The approved press release should be sent to local media outlets according to their deadlines. In smaller communities, you may have to notify the local paper a week or more in advance. In communities with a daily paper and TV station, two days' notice would be appropriate to get coverage for your event.

MT OPI will handle the media outreach according to your preference. If you choose to have OPI send the release on your behalf, please provide OPI with a list of the media outlets you would like to have informed of your HUSSC award, and the communications director will send out the approved release on behalf of your school.

If the leadership in your school has a relationship with members of the local media, ask that person to send the approved press release to his/her media contact and to invite the media member to the celebration. When inviting members of the media, be sure to inform them of your school's policy regarding photographing students. (Consult with your Principal regarding necessary photography approvals.)

Even if OPI sends the release on your behalf, schools are encouraged to call their local media outlets 1-2 days before the event with a personal invitation to attend to help generate excitement for the event.

Step 14- Confirm Number of Luncheon Guests, Order Food

The day you send out the invitations, give the person you listed as the RSVP contact a list of the guests so s/he can easily check off people who are coming. Let the School Food Service Manager know how many guests will be eating lunch.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Step 15- Decorate

Consider decorating the cafeteria and/or auditorium with school wellness posters designed by the students. Make sure the HUSSC award banner is hung prior to the celebration; in a visible location.

Step 16- Provide a Media Kit

The day of the event, provide reporters with a small media kit (a copy of the approved Press Release, the Program, and contact information for someone at your school who can answer any questions the media member may have). Remind media members of your school's rules regarding photographing students.

Step 17- Enjoy!

Step 18- Post Approved Pictures on your school's website and bulletin board as well as in your school's newsletter.